



# Research Methodology

Lesson - 3

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# Content

- **Research Problem and its Necessity**
- **Selection of Research Problem**
- **Defining Research Problem – Techniques**
- **Components of a Research Problem**

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# Research Problem and its Necessity

A researcher should first identify a problem and formulate it, so as to make it amenable or susceptible to research. In general, a research problem refers to an unanswered question that a researcher might encounter in the context of either a theoretical or practical situation, which he/she would like to answer or find a solution to.

A research problem is a specific issue, difficulty, contradiction, or gap in knowledge that you will aim to address in your research. You might look for practical problems aimed at contributing to change, or theoretical problems aimed at expanding knowledge.

Thus, identification of a research problem is the pre-condition to conducting research. A research problem is said to be the one which requires a researcher to find the best available solution to the given problem. That is, the researcher needs to find out the best course of action through which the research objective may be achieved optimally in the context of a given situation.

A proper definition of research problem will enable the researcher to be on the track whereas an ill-defined problem may create hurdles.

# Selection of Research Problem

The following points must be taken into account while selecting a problem.

- Subject which is overdone should not be normally chosen, for it will be a difficult task to throw any new light in such a case.
- Controversial subject should not become the choice of an average researcher.
- Too narrow or too vague problems should be avoided.
- The problem should be chosen in such a way that the ingredients required for the study should be within the reach of a researcher.
- The importance of the subject, the qualifications and the training of a researcher, the costs involved, the time factor are few other criteria that must also be considered in selecting a problem.
- The selection of a problem must be preceded by a preliminary study.

# Defining Research Problem - Techniques

Research problem should be defined in a systematic manner, giving due weightage to all relating points. The technique for the purpose involves the undertaking of the following steps generally one after the other.

- Statement of the problem in a general way;
- understanding the nature of the problem;
- Surveying the available literature
- Developing the ideas through discussions; and
- Rephrasing the research problem into a working proposition.

# Components of a Research Problem

- There should be an individual or a group who have some difficulty or problem.
- There should be some objective(s) to be pursued. A person or an organization who wants nothing cannot have a problem.
- There should be alternative ways of pursuing the objective the researcher wants to pursue. This implies that there should be more than one alternative means available to the researcher. This is because if the researcher has no choice of alternative means, he/she would not have a problem.
- There should be some doubt in the mind of the researcher about the choice of alternative means. This implies that research should answer the question relating to the relative efficiency or suitability of the possible alternatives.
- There should be a context to which the difficulty relates.



**End of Lesson - 3**

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